

The Nuns of Mount Carmel.

To join the order of the Nuns of Mount Carmel is considered one of the greatest sacrifices which a Roman Catholic young lady can make. The order is divided into the calcateated, or "shod" and discalceated, or "unshod," branches. The latter is by far the most rigorous, and its members are but few. There are but three convents of the latter in the United States—one at Baltimore, one at St. Louis and one at New Orleans. The one at Baltimore was established as far back as 1790. The St. Louis institution was founded in 1863. Shortly after its opening Miss Roman, a niece of Ex-Governor Roman of this city, entered the order. The young lady was one of the belles of the Crescent City. Her beauty, her wealth, and her brilliant conversational powers rendered her an ornament to society. The love of God, however, was stronger within her than that of either pleasure or social position, and she renounced all the charms of society for the austere life and solitude of the convent. In 1877 she returned to her native city together with Sisters Marguerite, Dolorosa and Gertrude, with the intention of founding a convent here. They first established themselves in a private residence on Ursulines street. Finding it inadequate to their purposes, the removed to the present building, on Barracks, between Rampart and Burgundy streets. In buying it they incurred a heavy debt, which has been a burden to them ever since.

A low flight of steps leads to the entrance. One of the "out" or mendicant nuns answers to the bell. The first object that strikes the eye of the visitor is an etagere on which are exhibited beautiful specimens of the fancy work of the sisters. These are sold to visitors and help to support the institution. Two statues attract the attention immediately. These are the perfect cleanliness of everything, and the complete silence that reigns. The furniture is rough and very plain, but the neatness of arrangement prevents one from noticing its simplicity at first. In the hall there are two doors opposite each other. One of these opens into the chapel, the largest visible room. The hangings of the altar are the only things in the whole building which approach in any way to richness. On one side of the altar is a child's crib, artistically adorned, on which lies the figure of a babe, wrought in wax by one of the nuns. On the other side of the altar there is a great window, which is covered by a perforated screen. It is behind these that the sisters listen to the services which are read every morning by the chaplain, Father Roydhaus, of the society of Jesus. Near this is another window through which the sisters receive the Holy Sacrament. On that occasion the parts of their faces above the mouth are closely veiled.

The other door in the hall leads into a small reception-room which opens into several other rooms of similar dimensions. The principal feature of the first room spoken of is a large window barred, and covered with the same sort of perforated screen as that in the chapel. Facing a seat in front of this window one can hear the tones of voice coming from behind the screen. No form can be observed. The voice belongs to Mother Teresa, formerly Miss Roman. No member of the outside world has seen her face since her stay in the convent. Those who saw her on her arrival in New Orleans described her as a lady of commanding presence, tall, and inclining to corpulency.

Neither she nor any of her companions, with the exception of the mendicant nuns, ever step across the boundary of this alcove, and therefore no idea can be formed of the inner surroundings. There is a garden which the sisters cultivate in connection with the building. It is raised several feet from the ground, and presents a very pretty appearance.

The mode of life prescribed by the or-

der is very severe and self-denying. They take but six hours sleep, and devote over eight hours to penance and prayer. These eight hours are taken up by the regularly prescribed prayers, but besides these private prayers are said. The latter are often accompanied by self-imposed hardships. The dress of the nuns is very simple. The clothing is of coarse wool. The hood is composed of linen. A sandal of coarse sackcloth is worn on the feet. The food is very simple, as no meat or anything prepared with fat is tasted. There are but two meals taken a day—one called dinner, at 11 A. M., and a collation at 6 P. M. These rules do not apply to the mendicant sisters, who are allowed to partake of meat and wear shoes. The hours not given to sleep and prayer they devote to manual labor.

No wonder that an order that imposes so many hardships can find but few members. Since its establishment here but four have joined, making the total number of occupants eight. These are Sisters Sophie, Xavier, Francois and Claire. The latter three are the "out" or mendicant sister. Sisters Sophie is Miss Freret, a member of the ancient and well-known family of this city.—*New Orleans Picayune.*

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